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INSIDE THIS "INSIDE"

Page

Nelson Fitton retires after 18 years as chief of USDA's publishing program...	1
Veteran public affairs specialist named editor of USDA employee newsletter...	1
Changes in ag information heads reported at six land grant universities.....	2
Doug Wakefield, USDA radio specialist, leaves to start consulting business...	2
Public affairs specialist in New York available for full-time position.....	2
Michigan State University seeks radio editor and TV editor-technician.....	3
Ag Communicators in Education needs clip art for upcoming Clip Art Book.....	3
Farm broadcasting featured in recent issue of BROADCASTING magazine.....	3
EXTENSION REVIEW magazine gets new look for more flexibility in layouts.....	3
New USDA Teleconference Center "open for business," both audio and video.....	4
University of Idaho ag communicator asks about computer output display.....	4

USDA PUBLISHING CHIEF RETIRES

Nelson Fitton, chief of the Publishing Division in USDA's Office of Information, retired Dec. 31 after 31 years of service, so that he might spend more time directing the construction and investment firm that he heads, compiling his poetry, building a huge stone retaining wall, teaching, writing, gardening, traveling, playing tennis and performing charity work (not necessarily in that order).

Fitton, named "communicator of the year" in 1984 by the National Association of Government Communicators, has been chief of the Publishing Division since 1966.

Ed Poe, printing and publications officer in the same division, has been named acting division chief.

Much has already been written about Fitton, never an underachiever.

To that might be added, however, that Fitton: Chairs the committee on editing in the USDA Graduate School. Chaired the federal government's Interagency Task Force on Revision of OMB Circular A-3 (he may report on proposed revisions in a future issue of "Inside Information"). Built his own 15-room home with the help of two other persons. Has personally laid 280 tons of stone as a "beginning" on his retaining wall. Has surrounded his home in Alexandria, Va., with 800 azaleas and 100 rhododendrons.

USDA EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER GETS NEW EDITOR

"USDA," newsletter for USDA's 125,000 employees, is undergoing some changes--from a 4-page biweekly to an 8-page monthly.

Meanwhile, editor Sharon Edwards has left on maternity leave and is now the proud mother of a new son.

George Holcomb, who has been in the Publishing Division of USDA's Office of Information, has moved to OI's Special Programs Division to edit the newsletter, coordinate departmental employee communications and carry out other sundry information duties.

UNIVERSITY INFORMATION CHANGES ANNOUNCED

Ovid Bay, USDA Extension Service information director, reports some information head changes at land grant universities.

Dr. Larry Whiting, head of agricultural information at the University of Maryland, has accepted the position as chairman of the agricultural information program at Ohio State University. He will assume his new duties about April 1.

Gary Nugent, who asked to be relieved of administrative duties, will remain on the Ohio staff as the specialist for electronic media.

New head of agricultural communications at the University of Minnesota is Dr. Richard Holloway, administrator in the Medical School at the university. His move was effective January 1.

In case you missed the announcements, Bay notes, Dr. Doug Darden has moved from head of agricultural information at the University of Arkansas to the University of Kentucky as head. Charles Johnson has moved up to the top position at Arkansas. And, Mike Futrell has moved to the top spot in ag communications at Louisiana State University.

USDA RADIO SPECIALIST BECOMES CONSULTANT

Doug Wakefield, who seems almost casually to reject his blindness as confining while he brings news of agriculture and science to the world, has decided to leave USDA's Office of Information for private enterprise.

In early January, he began heading his own two companies--one nonprofit and the other, hopefully, for profit.

The nonprofit firm, called Center for Speech Technology, will be a consulting and training center specializing in computer equipment for the visually handicapped. He's learned to use such equipment very skillfully while with the USDA Radio & Television Division.

The second firm, Talking Computers, Inc., will lease equipment, especially to agencies and businesses, and then sell that equipment to individuals after the leasing period.

With the Office of Information's Radio & Television Division for 18 months and before that being with USDA's Agricultural Research Service for a number of years, Wakefield has interviewed scientists and others all across the country, both by telephone and in person. He and 10 other disabled persons climbed 14,410-foot-high Mount Rainier in 1981.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST AVAILABLE

Diane E. Botnick, public relations and security editor for magazines in health care, retail and banking trades in New York City, writes that she is available for full-time employment.

Botnick has a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University (January 1984), and a bachelor's degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University (June 1975).

In addition to being a public relations consultant to the government of Jamaica, Botnick has been an editorial consultant to the United Nations' Food & Agriculture Organization, a Peace Corps volunteer, a farm worker on a kibbutz in Israel, and a newspaper reporter (while an undergraduate).

She may be reached at 414 West 121st Street, No. 56, New York, NY 10027. Her office phone number is (212) 869-1300; home phone number is (212) 864-4961.

MICHIGAN STATE SEEKS RADIO-TV EDITORS

Two communications vacancies have been announced by Maxine Ferris, manager of information services at Michigan State University's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The position of radio editor calls for a person with three years of experience in radio program materials production to be responsible for the production and distribution of a variety of radio program materials for the college.

A bachelor's degree in communications or a related field is preferred.

A similar degree is preferred for the other position, that of television editor-technician, who will assist in the production and distribution of a variety of television and radio program materials for the college.

That person also would occasionally be required to assume full responsibility for these functions on a temporary basis. A working knowledge of the appropriate equipment is required, Ferris notes.

Interested persons should contact Dr. Maxine Ferris, Manager, ANR Information Services, 1 Morrill Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824; Dialcom electronic mailbox AGS1221; telephone (517) 355-1758.

ANYONE GOT ANY CLIP ART TO SUBMIT?

Clip Art Book No. 6 needs contributions of all kinds, reports Hal Taylor, coordinator of Agricultural Communicators in Education.

Previous ACE clip art books have been most useful among county Extension Service offices and others, Taylor observes. Specific needs for this clip art book are spot drawings on all subjects and art for work in international activities, as well as in minority work.

Taylor says to send the work you recommend for use in the book to Ruth Thompson, P.O.Box 55406, Mississippi State, MS 397621, by Feb. 4.

FARM BROADCASTING FEATURED IN MAGAZINE

Farm broadcasting is the subject of a special report extending over 16 pages in the Dec. 17 issue of BROADCASTING magazine.

The immediacy of the medium, the closeness between broadcaster and audience, the broad knowledge background needed, "narrowcasting" to geographic areas and several other aspects of the field are discussed in the article, which features the observations of many broadcasters.

Services offered by the Radio & Television Division of USDA's Office of Information are described in a sidebar.

'EXTENSION REVIEW' GETS NEW LOOK

The fall issue of EXTENSION REVIEW, quarterly periodical of USDA's Extension Service, introduced its new look in design, created by the Design Division of USDA's Office of Information.

The two- or three-column layout gives more flexibility in the use of illustrations and photos and gives the text a less dense look, points out James Wolfe, managing editor. The new design includes a bar above the text and Garamond Book type instead of Optima. A narrow left column now identifies the author, with or without a photo.

TELECONFERENCE CENTER OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The new USDA Teleconference Center is officially scheduled to open its doors to USDA agencies for both audio and full motion videoconferencing services at the end of January, according to Larry Quinn, chief of the Video & Film Division of USDA's Office of Information.

Here's what is underway:

--A 2-foot in diameter microwave dish has been installed to carry USDA's video signal to the National Teleport atop the National Press Club Building where it will be routed to a selected satellite uplink and satellite transponder.

--A 30-port Darome teleconferencing bridge with high quality audio transmission capabilities has been installed.

--USDA conference Room 1605-S is being updated for both audio and video teleconferencing with soundproofing, teleconferencing equipment, new lights and carpeting. A new oval teleconferencing table will be installed shortly. Video monitors will enable viewers to watch a live video conference from the video studio.

--Engineering and design changes are being made to USDA's video studio to prepare it for both the sending and receiving of live videoconferences, video press conferences, etc.

In addition to these physical changes, the Video & Film Division staff has taken part in an intensive videoconferencing training program. The staff has had audioconference training and taken part in "mock" teleconference sessions with the new USDA teleconferencing bridge.

For the first few months, the USDA Teleconference Center will operate on a developmental basis.

For now, Quinn encourages agencies not only to support the center but to use the audioconferencing bridge for trial or test teleconferences.

Free teleconference bridge services are currently available on a "meet-me" (call-in) basis, Quinn said. Later, a minimal charge will be made for these services, he said.

KNOW ABOUT DISPLAYING COMPUTER OUTPUT?

Scott Fedale, of the University of Idaho's Agricultural Communications Center, poses a modern question:

"I would like to know if anyone has found a satisfactory way of providing a large-screen display of 80-column computer output from an Apple 2-plus or 2e."

Fedale said he was talking about at least a 25-inch TV-size display or a 6-foot or larger video projector display, with good enough resolution to handle the 80-column display.

"If you are using something that works," he said, "please let me know the model number and price of the units."

"Respond to me at AGS706 (Dialcom)."

Well?

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, state departments of agriculture and land grant universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either John Crowley or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250 or to AGR009 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or call (202) 447-7454.

